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WELL SAID NEWSLETTER

Available on the web at OWRD home page, under *Agency Spotlight > Well Said Newsletter*. Please share with others at your organization. *Well Said* is a production of the OWRD Well Construction Section and is designed to inform the drilling industry and the public about program activities and other items of interest.

For questions, suggestions, or to subscribe to this newsletter, contact Kristopher Byrd at (503) 991-2470 or email at Kristopher.R.Byrd@water.oregon.gov



Serving the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management.

APRIL 2026 WELL CONSTRUCTOR EXAM

The next Well Constructor exam is scheduled for April 13, 2026, at the Oregon Water Resources Department's (OWRD) office in Salem. To sign up to take the test, please complete an application which is located on the first two pages of the study guide. Mail the completed application and check or money order in the amount of \$25.00 to the Salem office. The study guide and other exam materials, including practice exams and video tutorials, can be found on the OWRD website under [Licensing Exam Information](#).

Below are the results of the January 2026 Well Constructor exam:

- One water supply well license examinee passed the exam and was issued a license after providing proof of their well drilling experience & welding proficiency.
- One monitoring well license examinee passed the exam and was issued a license after providing proof of their well drilling experience.
- One monitoring well trainee was issued a license after providing proof of their well drilling experience.

Please contact Buffy Madrigal-Adams, Well Licensing Specialist, with your questions regarding the exam or drilling experience requirements. She may be reached at Buffy.M.Madrigal-Adams@water.oregon.gov or (971) 287-8305.

2026 WELL CONSTRUCTOR LICENSE RENEWAL

For well constructors who have licenses expiring on June 30, 2026, this is a reminder that the fee for a two-year water supply or monitoring well license renewal is \$165.00. An additional fee of \$110.00 will be assessed for renewals submitted after June 30, 2026. Well constructors must have a minimum of 14 continuing education credits (CECs) to renew their license. Of the 14 credits, a minimum of two credits must be in Oregon rules and regulations. An Online Well Constructor Rules Course is offered on the Department's website. Use the same login credentials that you use for electronic submittal of well reports and start cards. Please click the checkbox after reading the "Statement of Integrity" to enter the course. Unfortunately, online payment for the course is not yet available; please mail in the invoice and payment to OWRD's Salem office via check or money order; the total fee for 2 CECs in Rules is \$90.00. Well constructors who currently meet the minimum CEC requirement may renew their license online here: <https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/WCC/resourcesforwellconstructors/Pages/LicenseRenewal.aspx>. License renewal paperwork will be mailed to the business address on file with the Department at the end of April. Please login to Update Contact Information to ensure that OWRD has current address and contact information.

For questions regarding license renewals or CECs, please contact Buffy Madrigal-Adams at Buffy.M.Madrigal-Adams@water.oregon.gov or (971) 287-8305.

E-FILING REPORTS: BATCH LIMIT

The Oregon Water Resources Department's online E-File [Well Report](#) and [Geotechnical Hole Report](#) application has a limit of **130 reports per submission** when paying online.

Drillers submitting a **large number** of reports online need to break them into **batches of 130** or fewer reports to complete the online payment process successfully.

If you have any questions or experience issues with report submissions, please contact the Well Construction Section at WRD_DL_WCC@water.oregon.gov or (971) 287-8305 for assistance.

SPECIAL STANDARD REQUESTS

Occasionally, site conditions make it difficult or even impossible to construct a well exactly as required by standard well construction rules. In these situations, the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) may approve Special Well Construction Standards that allow alternative methods or materials while still protecting groundwater resources.

Special Standards are intended for situations where local geologic or groundwater conditions require a different design, construction method, setback, or abandonment procedure than what is outlined in rule. They may also apply when new technologies or construction approaches, while not specifically addressed in rule, can provide equal protection.

Before completing a well using any method that does not meet standard construction requirements, the bonded well constructor must request and receive approval from the Department.

The request must include a description of the unusual condition that necessitates the request, the proposed method to address the condition, and a diagram or photo(s). It is important to note that Special Standards are not intended simply to reduce costs or make well construction more convenient. Any approved alternative must provide at least the same level of groundwater protection as the existing rules.

If well constructors believe site conditions warrant a Special Standard, submitting a clear request early in the drilling process can help avoid delays and ensure the well is constructed in compliance with approved well construction standards.

For more information regarding Special Standards, please contact Tommy Laird, Well Construction Program Coordinator, at Tommy.K.Laird@water.oregon.gov or (503) 302-8618.

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OREGONBUYS FOR WELL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

OregonBuys is the State of Oregon's online procurement system where agencies, including the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), post projects for contractors to bid on. When OWRD receives grant funding for projects, such as constructing monitoring wells, the opportunity is posted on *OregonBuys* along with the Bid Solicitation Number, associated agency, and Bid Opening Date.

These projects often involve installing monitoring wells that help the department evaluate aquifer conditions and improve understanding of groundwater resources statewide. However, in some cases only a single company submits a bid. When few bids are received, it limits the department's ability to evaluate options and ensure the most effective use of grant funding. Broader contractor participation helps address this challenge.

Competitive bidding helps agencies obtain high-quality work at reasonable cost while ensuring public funds are used efficiently. For contractors, regularly monitoring *OregonBuys* can also provide valuable opportunities to participate in state-funded projects.

How to Submit a Bid

To submit a bid, contractors must first register as a supplier by creating a free account on *OregonBuys* and providing basic company information, including tax identification and contact details. After registering, log in and select the seller role.

From there, users can search for open solicitations, including those posted by OWRD. After locating a project, bidders can create and submit a quote through the system. Be sure to review the solicitation carefully and include all required information before submitting.

Support is available at support.oregonbuys@das.oregon.gov, and each solicitation includes a departmental contact for project-specific questions.

Understanding the Bid Opening Date

The Bid Opening Date simply represents the deadline by which all bid materials must be submitted through *OregonBuys*. Bids submitted after this time cannot be considered.

Why Participation Matters

Creating an account and regularly checking *OregonBuys*, especially for OWRD projects, helps ensure important monitoring well work can move forward. Increased participation promotes competitive pricing, improves project outcomes, and ultimately supports better understanding and management of Oregon's groundwater resources.

HOW ARE BORINGS CLASSIFIED?

The department oversees the construction of borings in situations where groundwater is at risk of contamination. The type of boring and its intended purpose determines which set of regulations applies. A common point of confusion involves distinguishing between different types of borings. As a general rule, any boring intended to locate or obtain water is considered a well.

Oregon Administrative Rule 690-200-0005 references [Table 200-1](#), which outlines classifications for many common boring types and identifies the standards associated with each. While this table serves as a helpful guide, it is not exhaustive. Some specialized or less common borings may fall under the authority of other agencies, depending on their purpose and characteristics. Examples include holes constructed for exploring or producing petroleum, minerals, or geothermal resources, which are regulated by the Oregon Department of Geologic and Mineral Industries.

When a boring type does not appear in the table, or if questions arise about how a particular boring should be classified or regulated, drillers are encouraged to reach out for clarification. Inquiries can be directed to Tommy Laird, Well Construction Program Coordinator, at (503) 302-8618 or Tommy.K.Laird@water.oregon.gov.

ARE SUMPS CONSIDERED WELLS?

During recent backflow prevention device inspections, department field staff encountered a growing number of features labeled as “sumps” by landowners and contractors. In many instances, however, these excavations did not meet the legal definition of a sump under Oregon’s well construction rules, leading to confusion and potential compliance issues.

Under Oregon regulations, a feature qualifies as a sump only when it meets two specific criteria: it must have an average diameter of **at least 10 feet**, and it must be **no more than 10 feet deep**. When both conditions are satisfied, the structure is considered a sump and is exempt from well construction requirements. It is important to note, though, that any groundwater use from a qualifying sump remains fully subject to Oregon water law, including the rules governing exempt and non-exempt uses.

If an excavation is **smaller than 10 feet in diameter or exceeds 10 feet in depth**, it does **not** meet the definition of a sump. In those cases, the feature must be reconstructed to meet the dug well standards outlined in Oregon Administrative Rule 690-210-0400.

To avoid costly reconstruction and potential enforcement actions, property owners and contractors are encouraged to carefully evaluate proposed excavations before beginning work. Identifying the correct classification early in the process helps ensure both compliance and efficient project planning.

For additional information about sump requirements, please contact Tommy Laird, Well Construction Program Coordinator, at (503) 302-8618 or Tommy.K.Laird@water.oregon.gov.

INNER CASING

Occasionally, routine well inspections reveal that wells constructed using the inner-casing method do not meet the minimum standards outlined in Oregon Administrative Rule. The most common deficiencies relate to the height of the outer casing and the required overlap of the inner casing.

The outer casing must extend a minimum of 12 inches above the finished land surface, the pumphouse floor, or the local surface runoff level. This requirement is intended to reduce the risk of surface water intrusion and protect groundwater from contamination. When outer casing does not meet the minimum height requirement, the well inspector will contact the well constructor and issue a repair/abandonment letter to bring the well into compliance.

Proper overlapping between the inner and outer casings is also essential. The inner casing is required to extend at least 8 feet into the outer well casing. The annular space between the inner and outer casings must be sealed to prevent vertical movement of water between formations. The seal must extend a minimum of five feet into the consolidated formation and at least eight feet into the upper permanent well casing. The seal between the lower and upper well casings must be cement grout only.

For more information regarding inner casing, please contact Tommy Laird, Well Construction Program Coordinator, at Tommy.K.Laird@water.oregon.gov or (503) 302-8618.

WELL CONSTRUCTOR'S LICENSE REVOKED

In a Final Order issued on December 15, 2025, the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) revoked Water Supply Well Constructors License #2057, belonging to Ms. Rena Williams of Access H2O, and assessed \$4,450.00 in civil penalties.

The license revocation and civil penalties stem from multiple violations, including material misstatement of fact on three well reports, failure to timely submit Commencement of Work and Seal Placement Notifications, failure to wait 72 hours prior to beginning work on a well without an Emergency Notification, failure to submit a Start Card fee in a timely manner, failure to timely submit well reports within 30 days after completion of the work, and failure to timely submit a groundwater use recording fee. Ms. Williams was also required to submit amended well reports, as the original well reports were submitted prior to completion of the wells and do not accurately reflect the final well construction.

The Department's Well Construction Program works to ensure that well constructors and landowners use proper construction, maintenance, and abandonment practices that protect aquifers and support their long-term use. Through administering construction standards, conducting inspections, and overseeing continuing education and licensing for well constructors, the program provides the oversight and guidance necessary to safeguard Oregon's groundwater resources.

Questions about OWRD's Well Construction Program should be directed to wrd_dl_wcc@water.oregon.gov.

GEOTECHNICAL HOLE REMINDER

The Water Resources Department would like to remind professionals who construct geotechnical holes that a Geotechnical Hole Report Form must be submitted for **each boring** that meets specific criteria. A report is required for any hole constructed **within 50 feet** of a water supply or monitoring well, any hole used to **assess water quality**, any hole drilled in an area of **known or reasonably suspected contamination**, or any geotechnical hole **exceeding 18 feet in depth**.

A wide range of geotechnical holes fall under these reporting requirements. This includes drive points, soil and rock borings, temporary sample holes, permeability test holes, inclinometers, and soil vapor holes, among others. Even when a geotechnical hole does not meet the criteria for submitting a report, a qualified professional is still responsible for overseeing both the construction and proper abandonment of the hole.

For questions about geotechnical hole requirements or professional responsibilities, please contact Tommy Laird at (503) 302-8618 or Tommy.K.Laird@water.oregon.gov.

MEET TONY JANICEK



Tony first joined the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) in 2012 as an intern in the Dam Safety Section while also attending

graduate school at Oregon State University. After graduating, he left Oregon for Maine where he worked in the private sector designing water and wastewater treatment facilities. In 2016, Tony rejoined OWRD's Dam Safety Section as a Civil Engineer. Since 2022, Tony has been the manager of the Dam Safety Program, which regulates over 940 dams throughout Oregon.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, a Master of Science in Water Resource Engineering, and a doctorate in Ecological Engineering. He is also a registered Professional Engineer in Oregon and Maine. In his spare time, he enjoys walking on the beach and traveling with his wife and two dogs.



STRUCK-BY AND CAUGHT-IN/BETWEEN HAZARDS

As spring arrives and well drilling activities increase across the state, so does the potential for serious workplace hazards. Two of the most frequent and dangerous types of incidents on drilling sites are struck-by and caught-in/between injuries. Struck-by incidents involve harm caused by moving objects or vehicles, while caught-in/between hazards occur when a worker is pinned, crushed, or squeezed between objects, including trench cave-ins or machinery components. These hazards consistently rank among the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) leading causes of serious injuries and fatalities in construction, underscoring the need for renewed awareness as field operations pick up.

Why This Matters for Well Drilling

Well drilling environments present a complex mix of heavy equipment, rotating machinery, suspended loads, and confined workspaces. Even a brief lapse in attention can result in severe injury or death. As crews transition back into full spring workloads, attention to site layout, communication practices, and equipment operation becomes especially critical. Understanding the risks and reinforcing safe behaviors helps prevent incidents before they occur.

Recognizing Common Hazards

Workers should remain alert to the movement of drill rods, casing, and tooling, all of which can swing unexpectedly. Rotating drill heads, augers, and drive components also create constant risk, particularly where pinch points exist between moving machinery and fixed structures. Backing vehicles and support trucks present their own challenges, especially in tight areas with limited visibility. Even materials stored on site, if not properly secured, can roll, shift, or fall, creating additional struck-by hazards.

Building Safer Work Practices

Protective work zones should be clearly established around rotating and moving equipment to prevent workers from entering hazardous areas. Suspended loads must never be crossed under or stepped over, regardless of how brief the task may seem. Clear communication between drillers and ground crews is essential, with hand signals or radios used whenever visibility or noise limits direct interaction. Workers should maintain distance from pinch points and avoid placing their hands near moving parts. When rigs or support vehicles are backing, designated spotters should always guide the movement. Drill rods, casing, and tools must be properly secured when not in use to prevent unintended movement.

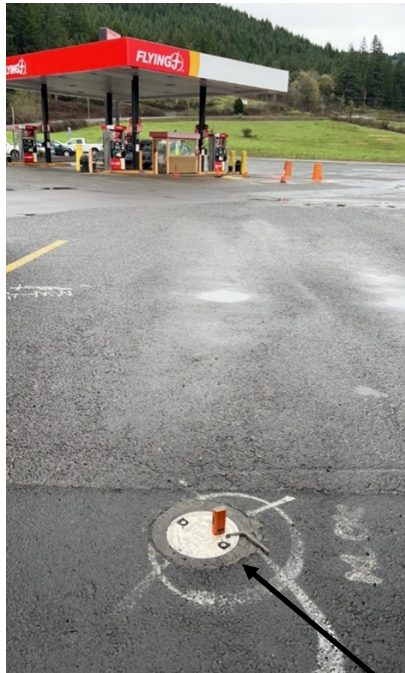
The Role of Personal Protective Equipment

Required personal protective equipment (PPE) remains a crucial layer of defense. Workers should wear hard hats, high-visibility clothing, appropriate gloves, protective boots, and safety glasses or face shields at all times on site. While PPE cannot replace safe work practices, it provides essential protection when hazards cannot be completely eliminated. Crews are encouraged to stop work and speak up whenever something appears unsafe. A short pause to reassess conditions can prevent injuries, reduce equipment damage, and minimize operational downtime.

Please visit <https://www.osha.gov/construction/infrastructure> for more information.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Bentonite being hydrated during seal installation



New well in South Central Oregon



New well in Eastern Oregon



New monitoring wells in North Central Oregon



Well inspector Ryan Pillsbury presenting at the spring OGWA conference.



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